

Ernst Loosen and the J.L. Wolf estate



The 19th-century winery building at the historic, vine-covered J.L. Wolf estate villa in the village of Wachenheim.

In 1996, **Ernst Loosen** took over the languishing J.L. Wolf estate in the Pfalz region of Germany. He did it because he wanted to make world-class dry Rieslings that would complement his fruity Dr. Loosen wines from the Mosel. Delicacy and mineral fruitiness are the greatest attributes of Mosel Riesling, and those qualities are often lost when making the wines dry. This is not the case in the Pfalz.

The Pfalz region lies between the Haardt Mountains and the Rhine River, directly north of France's Alsace region. In fact, the Haardt Mountains are part of the same geological formation as the Vosges. As in Alsace, the mountains protect the region from the harsh Atlantic weather, making it one of the warmer and drier areas of Germany. This means that achieving full ripeness is seldom a problem. That's important because mature fruit is essential to making concentrated dry wines that have enough terroir-driven body to balance Germany's naturally high acidities.

For Ernst, taking on the J.L. Wolf estate was *déjà vu* all over again. As with the Dr. Loosen estate, Ernst seized the opportunity to revitalize a once-famous wine estate blessed with old vines in great vineyards. The two estates also have similar locations: The Dr. Loosen estate is in Bernkastel, at the heart of what is called the Middle Mosel, while J.L. Wolf is in Wachenheim, at the center of a picturesque wine area known as the Middle Haardt.



Typical vineyards of the Middle Haardt area of the Pfalz region, with the low-lying Haardt Mountains in the background.

The quality concept at J.L. Wolf

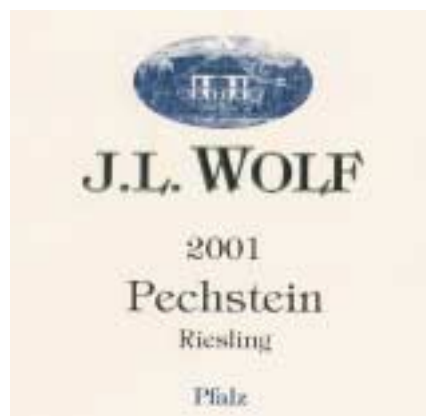
Ernst Loosen's focus at J.L. Wolf is on dry wines from top vineyards. The old vines give naturally low yields for maximum ripeness and concentration. The decidedly unmodern cellar has forced Ernst to use tried and true, old-fashioned winemaking techniques that don't rely on high-tech gadgetry. He's learned to be very resourceful and to make the most of what is available – just as he did at Dr. Loosen.

Ernst uses an unofficial, Burgundy-style classification of the vineyards at J.L. Wolf, based largely on a vineyard property tax assessment done by the Bavarian government in 1828. Historical accounts of quality and price clearly point to five top-rank vineyards at J.L. Wolf: Pechstein, Ungeheuer and Jesuitengarten in the village of Forst, Hoheburg in Ruppertsberg and Leinhöhle in Deidesheim. Three second-tier vineyards are located adjacent to the estate villa – Goldbächel, Gerümpel and Belz.

From each of these vineyards, only one dry wine is made. With occasional exceptions for noble sweet wines (Beerenauslese or Eiswein, for example), the Prädikat system is not used at J.L. Wolf. It is required by the German wine law, however, so all of the technical details (QmP, Spätlese, Trocken, etc.) can be found on a back label. The simplified front label shows only the producer, vintage, vineyard, variety and region.

The three quality levels of J.L. Wolf

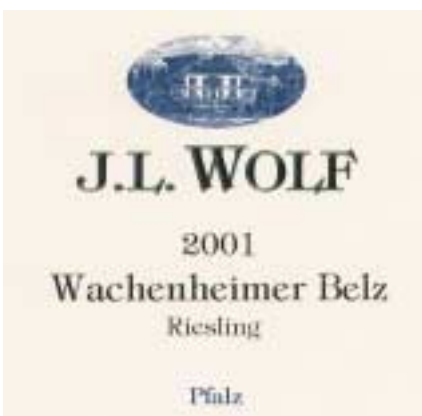
First-growth vineyards



- Jesuitengarten
- Hoheburg
- Pechstein
- Leinhöhle
- Ungeheuer

The five “first-growth” vineyards at J.L. Wolf are labeled much like the grands crus of Burgundy. Only one wine is produced from each of these vineyards, and they are always dry. These are powerful, concentrated wines that are very expressive of their terroir. Low yields mean they are made in very limited quantities.

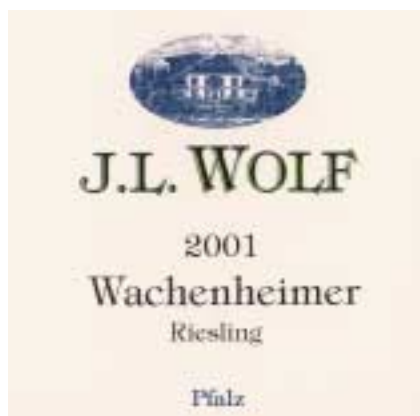
Second-growth vineyards



- Wachenheimer Belz
- Wachenheimer Gerümpel
- Wachenheimer Goldbächel

As with Burgundy’s premier cru designation, the dry Rieslings from the three second-tier J.L. Wolf vineyards are labeled with the village and vineyard name. These vineyards are acknowledged to be of better-than-average quality, but they don’t produce wines that are as immense and expressive of the soil as the top sites.

Village wines



- Forster Riesling
- Wachenheimer Riesling
- Deidesheimer Riesling

The third quality level for J.L. Wolf dry Rieslings is the “village” wines. They are made from good vineyards that reflect the unique characteristics of soil and climate in each village. These wines are priced lower than the single-vineyard wines, making them some of the best values in dry, balanced German Riesling.

(Please note: the vineyard classification at J.L. Wolf is an internal rating based on historical records, but is not recognized by German wine law.)

Villa Wolf

This is a delicious, full-bodied Pinot Gris from the warm, dry Pfalz region of Germany, where the grape variety was first identified. It is an introductory wine, similar in concept to the Dr. L Riesling from the Dr. Loosen estate.

Villa Wolf Pinot Gris is made in a dry style that will appeal to wine lovers around the world. Half of each vintage is fermented in used French oak barriques for depth and richness. The other half is made in stainless steel tanks to preserve fruit and freshness. By supplementing grapes from J.L. Wolf vineyards with contracted fruit from other growers in the area, Ernst is able to keep Villa Wolf Pinot Gris very affordable and to produce sufficient quantities to ensure availability.



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